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Security Council

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The Security Council,

Reaffirming its resolutions 1261 (1999) of 25 August 1999, 1314 (2000) of 11 August 2000, 1379 (2001) of 20 November 2001, 1460 (2003) of 30 January 2003, 1539 (2004) of 22 April 2004, 1612 (2005) of 26 July 2005, 1882 (2009) of 4 August 2009, 1998 (2011) of 12 July 2011, 2068 (2012) of 19 September 2012, 2143 (2014) of 7 March 2014, 2225 (2015) of 18 June 2015, and all relevant Statements of its President, which contribute to a comprehensive framework for addressing the protection of children affected by armed conflict,

Reiterating its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and, in this connection, its commitment to address the widespread impact of armed conflict on children, and the long-term consequences this has for durable peace, security and development,

Convinced that the protection of children affected by armed conflict should be an important aspect of any comprehensive strategy to resolve conflict and sustain peace and stresses also the importance of adopting a broad strategy of conflict prevention, which addresses the root causes of armed conflict in a comprehensive manner in order to enhance the protection of children on a long-term basis,

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Reaffirming the importance of promoting the United Nations ability to deliver on its founding determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and putting emphasis on preventive diplomacy, mediation and good offices, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and sustaining peace,

Underlining in this regard the importance of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and recognizing that a strong focus is needed on combatting poverty, deprivation and inequality to prevent and protect children from all violations and abuses in particular in the context of armed conflict and to promote the resilience of children, their families and their communities, and the importance of promoting education for all and peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development,

Recalling that all parties to armed conflict must comply strictly with the obligations applicable to them under international law for the protection of children in armed conflict, including those contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the involvement of Children in armed conflict, as well as the Geneva Conventions of 12th August 1949 and the Additional Protocols of 1977,

Stressing the primary role of Governments in providing protection and relief to all children affected by armed conflict, and recognizing the importance of strengthening national capacities in this regard,

Emphasizing the vital role of the United Nations, in consultations with international partners and key stakeholders including regional and subregional organizations, to support national authorities in developing strategies for sustaining peace, conflict prevention and peacebuilding as well as to ensure that these strategies strengthen coherence between political, security, human rights, development and rule of law activities, which remain the primary responsibility of Member States,

Recognizing the valuable contribution pertinent regional and subregional organizations and arrangements make for the protection of children affected by armed conflict,

Recognizing the important roles of both local and religious leaders and civil society networks in strengthening community-level protection, reintegration and combatting stigmatization of children, in particular girls, affected by armed conflict, including children born as a result of sexual violence in conflict,

Stressing that the best interests of the child as well as the specific needs and vulnerabilities of girls and boys should be duly considered when planning and carrying out actions concerning children in situations of armed conflict,

Stressing the importance of giving due consideration to child protection issues from the early stages of all peace processes, in particular the integration of child protection provisions, as well as of peace agreements that put strong emphasis on the best interest of the child, the treatment of children separated from armed groups as victims and focus on family and community-based reintegration,

Recalling the obligations of all parties to armed conflict applicable to them under international humanitarian law and human rights law, emphasizing that no child should be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily and calling on all Parties to conflict to cease unlawful or arbitrary detention as well as torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment imposed on children during their detention,

Recognizing the importance of providing sustainable, timely and appropriate reintegration and rehabilitation assistance to children affected by armed conflict, while ensuring that the specific needs of girls and boys as well as children with

disabilities are addressed, including access to health care, psychosocial support, and education programmes that contribute to the well-being of children and to sustainable peace and security,

Taking note of ongoing international and regional initiatives on Children and Armed Conflict, including the international conference held in Paris in 2007 on protecting children from unlawful recruitment or use by armed forces or armed groups and the follow-up conference held in Paris in 2017, and the commitments during the conferences,

Reaffirming that quality education provided in a safe environment in conflict areas is essential in halting and preventing recruitment and re-recruitment of children contrary to the obligations of parties to conflict,

Recognizing, in this regard, the importance of countering, notably through education and awareness-raising, all recruitment methods utilized by non-state armed groups targeting children,

Reaffirming its call on all parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, and underlining the importance of safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel to civilians in armed conflicts, and reaffirming the Security Council's role in promoting an environment that is conducive to the facilitation of humanitarian access to those in need,

1. *Strongly condemns* all violations of applicable international law involving the recruitment and use of children by parties to armed conflict as well as their re recruitment, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, abductions, attacks against schools and hospitals as well as denial of humanitarian access by parties to armed conflict and all other violations of international law, including international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, committed against children in situations of armed conflict and demands that all relevant parties immediately put an end to such practices and take special measures to protect children;

2. *Reaffirms* that the monitoring and reporting mechanism will continue to be implemented in situations listed in annex I and annex II ("the annexes") to the reports of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, in line with the principles set out in paragraph 2 of its resolution 1612 (2005), and that its establishment and implementation shall not prejudge or imply a decision by the Security Council as to whether or not to include a situation on its agenda;

3. *Calls* upon States and the United Nations to mainstream child protection into all relevant activities in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations with the aim of sustaining peace and preventing conflict;

4. *Reaffirms* the important role the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict can play in contributing to conflict prevention;

5. *Stresses* the important role of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict in carrying out her mandate regarding the protection of children affected by armed conflict, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions, and *stresses* in particular, within the context of her mandate, the importance of facilitating better collaboration among United Nations partners at the field level and between the United Nations and concerned Governments, and in supporting the UN Country Task Forces to enhance dialogue with concerned UN agencies, Governments and parties to an armed conflict, including by securing concrete commitments and advocating for appropriate response mechanisms, in this regard *requests* the Special Representative to continue engaging proactively with UN agencies, Member States, regional and subregional organizations, and non-state armed groups and *calls* on the

Special Representative, together with relevant child protection actors, to compile comprehensive best practices in order to implement them when appropriate;

6. *Stresses* the importance of regular and timely consideration of violations and abuses committed against children in armed conflict, in this regard welcomes the sustained activity of its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and invites the Working Group to make full use of tools within its mandate to promote the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including through increasing engagement with concerned Member States, in light of ongoing discussions on enhancing compliance;

7. *Acknowledges* that serious abuses and violations of human rights or violations of international humanitarian law, including against children, can be an early indication of a descent into conflict or escalation of conflict, as well as a consequence thereof;

8. *Expresses* its commitment to consider and use the tools of the United Nations system to ensure that early warning of potential conflicts translates into early, concrete preventive action, including towards the goal of protecting children and with a view to building sustainable peace, by or in coordination with the most appropriate United Nations or regional actor, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;

9. *Stresses* that the prevention of conflicts remains a primary responsibility of States and actions undertaken within the framework of conflict prevention by the United Nations should support and complement, as appropriate, the conflict prevention roles of national governments;

10. *Expresses* concern at regional and cross-border nature of violations and abuses against children affected by armed conflict and requests Member States, United Nations peacekeeping, peacebuilding and political missions and United Nations country teams, and calls on regional and subregional bodies, within their respective mandates and in close cooperation with the Governments of the countries concerned, to establish appropriate strategies and coordination mechanisms for information exchange and cooperation on child protection concerns, in particular on cross-border issues, bearing in mind relevant conclusions by the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and paragraph 2 (d) of its resolution 1612 (2005);

11. *Encourages* regional and subregional organizations and arrangements to continue mainstreaming child protection into their advocacy, policies, programmes and mission planning as well as to train personnel and include child protection staff in their peacekeeping and field operations and establish, within their secretariats, child protection mechanisms, including through appointing child protection focal points, as well as develop and expand regional and subregional initiatives to prevent violations and abuses against children affected by armed conflict;

12. *Expresses* deep concern at the high number of children killed or maimed, including as a direct or indirect result of hostilities between parties to armed conflict and of incidents of indiscriminate attacks against civilian populations, including those involving aerial bombardment, excessive use of force, landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices and use of children as human shields and *urges* all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular the principles of distinction, proportionality and the obligation to take all feasible precautions to avoid and in any event minimizing harm to civilians and civilian objects;

13. *Calls* upon all parties to armed conflict to allow and facilitate safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access to children, respect the exclusively humanitarian

nature and impartiality of humanitarian aid and respect the work of all United Nations humanitarian agencies and their humanitarian partners, without distinction, and *strongly condemns* the unlawful denial of humanitarian access and depriving civilians, particularly children, of objects indispensable to their survival, including willfully impeding relief supplies;

14. *Recalls* the importance of ensuring that children continue to have access to basic services during the conflict and post-conflict periods, including, inter alia, education and health care, and urges Member States, United Nations bodies and civil society to take specifically into account girls' equal access to education;

15. *Strongly condemns* attacks as well as threats of attacks in contravention of applicable international law against schools and/or hospitals, and protected persons in relation to them and reiterates its deep concern at the closure of schools and hospitals in situations of armed conflict as a result of attacks and threats of attacks and urges all parties to armed conflict to refrain from actions that impede children's access to education and to health services;

16. *Expresses deep concern* at the military use of schools in contravention of applicable international law, recognizing that such use may render schools legitimate targets of attack, thus endangering children's and teachers' safety as well as children's education and in this regard:

(a) Urges all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian character of schools in accordance with international humanitarian law;

(b) Encourages Member States to take concrete measures to deter the use of schools by armed forces and non-State armed groups in contravention of applicable international law;

(c) Urges Member States to ensure that attacks on schools in contravention of international humanitarian law are investigated and those responsible duly prosecuted;

(d) Calls upon United Nations country-level task forces to enhance the monitoring and reporting on the military use of schools;

17. *Stresses* the need to swiftly address, notably through education and awareness-raising, all recruitment methods utilized by non-state armed groups targeting children and encourages Member States to exchange good practices to this effect;

18. *Remains* gravely concerned by the human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law committed by all non-state armed groups, including those who commit acts of terrorism, including abuses and violations such as mass abductions and sexual and gender-based violence, particularly targeting girls, which can cause displacement and affect access to education and healthcare services, and emphasizing the importance of accountability for such abuses and violations;

19. *Stresses* the need to pay particular attention to the treatment of children associated or allegedly associated with all non-state armed groups, including those who commit acts of terrorism, in particular by establishing standard operating procedures for the rapid handover of these children to relevant civilian child protection actors;

20. *Expresses* grave concern at the use of detained children for information gathering purposes, and emphasizes that children who have been recruited in violation of applicable international law by armed forces and armed groups and are accused of having committed crimes during armed conflicts should be treated primarily as victims of violations of international law, and urges Member States to comply with

applicable obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and encourages access for civilian child protection actors to children deprived of liberty for association with armed forces and armed groups;

21. *Urges* Member States to consider non judicial measures as alternatives to prosecution and detention that focus on the rehabilitation and reintegration for children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups taking into account that deprivation of liberty of children should be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time, as well as to avoid wherever possible the use of pretrial detention for children, and calls on Member States to apply due process for all children detained for association with armed forces and armed groups;

22. *Welcomes* the launch of a process to compile practical guidance on the integration of child protection issues in peace processes and underlines the importance of engaging armed forces and armed groups on child protection concerns during peace processes and in the peacebuilding process and calls upon Member States, United Nations entities, the Peacebuilding Commission, and other parties concerned to integrate child protection provisions, including those relating to the release and reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces or armed groups, as well as provisions on the rights and well-being of children, into all peace negotiations, ceasefire and peace agreements, and in provisions for ceasefire monitoring, and taking into account children's views, where possible, in these processes;

23. *Calls* upon Member States, United Nations entities, including the Peacebuilding Commission and other parties concerned to ensure that the views of children are taken into account in programming activities throughout the conflict cycle, and to ensure that the protection, rights, well-being and empowerment of children affected by armed conflict are fully incorporated and prioritized in all post-conflict recovery and reconstruction planning, programs and strategies as well as in efforts on peacebuilding and sustaining peace and encourage and facilitate consideration of the views of children in these processes;

24. *Urges* concerned Member States to mainstream child protection and ensure that the specific needs of girls and boys are fully taken into account at all stages of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes (DDR), including through the development of a gender- and age-sensitive DDR process;

25. *Urges* concerned Member States, when undertaking security sector reforms, to mainstream child protection and ensure that the specific needs of girls and boys are fully taken into account, such as the inclusion of child protection in military training and standard operating procedures, including on the handover of children to relevant civilian child protection actors, the establishment of child protection units in national security forces, and the strengthening of effective age assessment mechanisms to prevent underage recruitment, while stressing in the latter regard the importance of ensuring universal birth registration, including late birth registration which should remain an exception;

26. *Encourages* Member States to focus on long-term and sustainable reintegration and rehabilitation opportunities for children affected by armed conflict that are gender- and age-sensitive, including access to health care, psychosocial support, and education programmes, as well as raising awareness and working with communities to avoid stigmatization of these children and facilitate their return, while taking into account the specific needs of girls and boys, to contribute to the well-being of children and to sustainable peace and security;

27. *Stresses* the importance of long-term and sustainable funding for mental health and psychosocial programming in humanitarian contexts and ensuring all

affected children receive timely and sufficient support, and encouraging donors to integrate mental health and psychosocial services in all humanitarian responses;

28. *Urges* both local and religious leaders to publicly condemn and advocate ending and preventing violations and abuses against children, and to engage with governments, the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders to support reintegration of children affected by armed conflict in their communities, including by raising awareness to avoid stigmatization of these children;

29. *Welcomes* the steps taken by a number of Member States to make international commitments to protect children affected by armed conflict, including through the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and calls on Member States that have not yet done so to ratify this instrument;

30. *Stressing* the importance of accountability for all violations and abuses against children in armed conflict and calls on all States to continue to address impunity by efforts to strengthen national accountability mechanisms, including building investigative and prosecutorial capacities, ensuring that those responsible for violations and abuses against children are brought to justice and held accountable without undue delay, including through timely and systematic investigation and prosecution, the results of which are made public, and ensure that all victims have access to justice as well as to the medical and support services that they need;

31. *Emphasizes* the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to investigate and prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other egregious crimes perpetrated against children and highlights in this regard the contribution of the International Criminal Court, in matters that are within its jurisdiction, and in accordance with the principle of complementarity to national criminal jurisdictions as set out in the Rome Statute;

32. *Reiterates* the Security Council's readiness to adopt targeted and graduated measures against persistent perpetrators of violations and abuses committed against children, taking into account the relevant provisions of its resolutions 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011) and 2068 (2012) and to consider including provisions pertaining to parties to armed conflict that engage in activities in violation of applicable international law relating to the rights and protection of children in armed conflicts, when establishing, modifying or renewing the mandate of relevant sanctions regimes;

33. *Recognizes* the role of United Nations peacekeeping operations and political missions in the protection of children, particularly the crucial role of child protection advisers in mainstreaming child protection and leading monitoring, prevention and reporting efforts in missions, and in this regard reiterates its decision to continue the inclusion of specific provisions for the protection of children in the mandates of all relevant United Nations peacekeeping operations and political missions, encourages deployment of child protection advisers to such missions, and calls upon the Secretary-General to ensure that the need for and the number and roles of such advisers are systematically assessed during the preparation and renewal of each United Nations peacekeeping operation and political mission, and that they are speedily recruited, expeditiously deployed, and properly resourced where appointed, in a transparent manner, and encourages the United Nations Secretariat, including DPKO and DPA, to take into account child protection when briefing the Council on country-specific situations;

34. *Stresses* the importance of mainstreaming the protection of children into the Secretary-General's efforts to mobilize all partners and stakeholders in support of more effective United Nations peacekeeping;

35. *Calls* for the continued implementation by United Nations peacekeeping operations of the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse as well as to ensure full compliance of their personnel with the United Nations code of conduct, reiterates its request to the Secretary-General to continue to take all necessary measures in this regard and to keep the Security Council informed, and urges Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries to continue taking appropriate preventive action, such as mandatory predeployment child protection training including on sexual exploitation and abuse, and to ensure full accountability in cases of such conduct involving their personnel;

36. *Urges* all United Nations entities, including peacekeeping missions, political missions, peacebuilding offices, United Nations offices, agencies, funds and programmes to give full attention to violations against children in the application of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on United Nations Support to non-United Nations Security Forces;

37. *Urges* all parties concerned, including Member States, United Nations entities, as well as financial institutions to support, as appropriate, bearing in mind national ownership, the development and strengthening of the capacities of national institutions and local civil society networks for advocacy, protection, reintegration and rehabilitation of children affected by armed conflict, particularly children released from armed forces and non-State armed groups, as well as national accountability mechanisms with timely, sustained and adequate resources and funding;

38. *Reiterates* its requests to the Secretary-General to continue to submit comprehensive annual reports to the Council on the implementation of its resolutions and Presidential statements on children and armed conflict and to ensure that in all his reports on country-specific situations the matter of children and armed conflict is included as a specific aspect of the report and expresses its intention to give its full attention to the information provided therein, including the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions and the recommendations of its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, when dealing with those situations on its agenda;

39. *Recognizes* the link between abductions, recruitment, sexual violence and trafficking and that children in situations of armed conflict can be especially vulnerable to trafficking in persons in armed conflict and to these forms of exploitation, and encourages relevant parts of the UN system, and international and regional bodies, within their respective mandates to work to address this issue;

40. *Decides* to remain actively seized of this matter.